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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT (FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY) Wednesday, September 1, 1937.

Subject: "TIPS FOR FOOD SHOPPERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

--ooOoo--

More news today for the listener who goes to market, for the housewife who does the family food shopping. Just here--direct from the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.--are the fortnightly notes on supplies and prices of seasonal foods. As I have told you before, these food facts and figures come from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture and are compiled for shoppers or consumers (like you and me) by the Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

Predictions about fruits and vegetables continue to be cheerful. From the news in the first paragraph here, I should say that if you don't get your quota of minerals and vitamins this season, it will be your own fault. Listen to these highlights which caught my eye at first glance: "Extremely favorable growing conditions.....marked improvement in crop prospects this season.....outlook for much larger supplies of both food and animal feed than in recent drought years."

The economists predict above-average supplies of many important foods, but of fruits and vegetables especially. As for prices, they say that many foods should be lower in price than last year. They explain that while increased incomes of shoppers this year will probably push up prices, the larger supplies of food will hold them down. The big supplies of animal feeds will probably bring meat prices down--but not until sometime next year.

For all the rest of 1937, you can expect large supplies of fruits and vegetables on the market. As the large supplies of late-crop products come on the market, prices will go down and drop below their level of last year. All truck crops in the late-producing States will probably be much larger than a year ago and well above average. The late potato crop, which started to market in the middle of August, is 18 percent larger than a year ago. The peach crop for August and September shipments will probably be twice as large as in 1936. And the apple and pear crops this year are both making records. Apple production will be the largest since 1931. The pear crop is of record size. Shipments of late-crop potatoes, apples and grapes will be largest in October.

So much for fruits and vegetables. Now about eggs, meat and butter.

Again predictions are cheerful. For the rest of the year, larger egg supplies are in prospect. And the price of eggs will not go up as much as it usually does during these coming months. During the last half of the year egg supplies come chiefly from cold storage, and on the first of August, 13 and a half million cases of shell and frozen eggs were in cold storage as compared with 10 and more

than a half million cases a year ago. As every good shopper knows, egg prices usually reach their low point in April or May and then go up in price until they hit their high point in November.

Now about meat. The price of pork will probably be slightly lower this fall. The hog-marketing year begins on the first of October when the spring pigs begin to move to market and prices usually go down. Usually the slaughter of hogs increases from October through December, but this year the increase will probably be less than usual because the 1937 spring pig crop was small and many farmers are holding their hogs for marketing at heavier weights in 1938. However, prices most likely will go down as usual at this season because the demand for storage products will probably be less than a year ago.

According to predictions, beef and lamb prices, are not going down--right away anyway. The economists say: "No immediate change in cattle prices is expected." But they also say that during the winter and spring prices may go down if the supply of grain-fed cattle increases. Prices of better-grade cattle probably will continue at or near their present relatively high levels, at least through the early fall. The usual fall decline in low-grade cattle prices is likely to be small because the large corn supplies this year mean good demand for cattle for feeding purposes.

Now about lamb. The story sounds very much the same. "Live lamb prices are expected to remain at or near their present level during the rest of the grass-fat lamb season, which ends in November. Lamb slaughter probably will increase less than usual from September through November because of a heavy demand for lambs for feeding purposes.

And now for the last notes--news about butter. Butter appears to be going up in price. As the economists put it: "Usual advances in butter prices are expected during the remainder of 1937." Ordinarily, butter prices reach their low in June and then move up to a peak in November and December. Prices ordinarily do not go up sharply until after August. Because of generally good pastures this year and increased feed supplies, milk production has continued at relatively high levels, and butter production will probably continue larger than in 1936 for several months. But during the latter part of the year it may be only about the same.

That concludes the news about seasonal foods and prices from the Consumer Market Service. I'll have more of this news for you in a fortnight.

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